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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 002843

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: GEORGIA: RUSSIAN MFA ON GENEVA TALKS

Classified By: Acting Pol M/C Eric Green for reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. MFA 4th CIS Department Deputy Director Dvinyanin said there would be no more progress in the Geneva Talks on Georgia until Georgia agreed to sign non-use of force agreements with its breakaway regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In variance with DFM Karasin's public characterization of the November 11 talks as a wasted effort, Dvinyanin described the November meeting as normal and routine, and underscored Russia's intention to continue meeting in that format. End Summary

Non-use of force

¶2. (C) MFA 4th CIS Department Deputy Director Alexei Dvinyanin told poloff November 19 that there would be no more progress in the Geneva Talks on Georgia until Georgia agreed to sign non-use of force agreements with its breakaway regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia. He clarified that this assessment applied to both working groups--on security and on humanitarian assistance--and underlined that Russia's position on this issue was "quite tough."

¶3. (C) Dvinyanin disagreed with the U.S. point of view that it was first necessary to fulfill existing obligations stemming from the Sarkozy-Medvedev agreements. He argued that Georgia was not abiding by those agreements, not Russia.

Lack of progress

¶4. (C) Dvinyanin disagreed that the lack of progress in the talks was due to South Ossetian intransigence. Instead, he accused Georgia of obstructing productive talks. In the MFA statement on the meetings that Dvinyanin had drafted (protect), Russia charged Georgia with using "politicized rhetoric designed for rejection of the realities" resulting from the August 2008 conflict.

¶5. (C) In variance with DFM Karasin's public characterization of the November 11 talks as a wasted effort, Dvinyanin described the November meeting as normal and routine. Russia did not intend to give up the Geneva format of meetings, noting the agreement to meet again in January.

Comment

¶6. (C) Russia is dutifully participating in the international talks and affirming its support to continue

them. But by blocking all useful progress, Moscow may be calculating that others will eventually throw in the towel.
Beyrle